

Protecting our Environment

After nearly a decade of environmental policies representing logging, mining, oil, livestock and other interests, Congress is finally in a position to restore a leadership position in stewardship of our planet and to protect our Nation's treasures.

I have been active in fighting for legislation in Congress to protect the environment from exploitation and abuse, working to protect endangered and threatened species, preserve public lands and forests, and safeguard our air and water. I am proud of my voting record, which has earned me the highest ratings from the [Defenders of Wildlife Action Fund](#) and the [League of Conservation Voters](#)

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Global Warming

The most significant threat to our environment is global warming. The overwhelming scientific evidence makes clear that global warming is a real phenomenon, and that human activities play a significant role. Now is the time to act on global warming. Twenty of the hottest years in recorded history occurred since the 1980's. Glaciers and permafrost are vanishing. Weather patterns are shifting. Migration patterns are being disrupted.

Meanwhile, human output of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases has reached an unprecedented level. These gases trap excess heat within the atmosphere, increasing the greenhouse effect. A tremendous amount of carbon dioxide comes from our cars, factories, and power plants. To fight global warming, dramatic changes will be needed in transportation, energy production, and public policy, and human behavior, and education will be essential to allowing those changes to happen.

Addressing our addiction to fossil fuels and foreign oil.

Our energy policies play a key role in our economic prosperity and the quality of life in our nation, and should be formed through an open and deliberative process. To this end, I have taken an active role in establishing the Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition (SEEC) in the House of Representatives. SEEC is working to ensure legislation to address our energy needs also creates millions of new, clean energy jobs, makes America more energy independent and secure, and addresses global warming. [[read more](#)]

Good Science Makes Good Policy

If nothing is done, global warming will have dire impacts on human existence and will dramatically alter life on Earth according to a [report](#) from the United States Global Change Research Program shows, the impacts of global warming are already being felt today, and they will only grow more significant in the future if we continue with business as usual.

The consequences of sudden climate change, such as rising oceans, increased storm activity, and the displacement of wildlife, are a threat to the economy, our coastal cities, and possibly the very existence of humanity. The public policy that will stop global warming must be informed by the best science.

To reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide, significant investment and incentives will be needed to change the technology, processes, and products that run our economy. We need all of the cars on the road to be 'greener' than the Toyota Prius I drive today. Electrical plants that burn fossil fuels will need to be replaced by facilities that use renewable energy sources, such as geothermal, wind, solar, and tidal energy.

Private industry can actually benefit from the shift to renewable energy. Innovative companies can play a role in the research and development of alternative energy technology. They can develop new products and infrastructure that will bring green energy to the masses. With the proper incentives, renewable energy technology will open up whole new markets.

Knowledge is the Key

In order to make wise choices, America truly needs to understand global warming, its causes, and potential impacts. Our nation, and our world, has the potential to address the dangers of global warming. Because of the technological advances brought about by scientists in Silicon Valley and elsewhere, new products and technologies are becoming available to allow us to utilize newly available forms of energy. I will continue working with my colleagues to ensure that

the government implements incentives and programs to promote the use of renewable energy. To ensure broad implementation of these measures, however, a large scale public information and education campaign will be needed.

As a former teacher, I understand the importance of imparting knowledge to help people make wise decisions. By providing people clear information about global warming, in a variety of forms, we can take away the fear and the sense of helplessness, and move people to take action. By informing people of the new technologies and programs as they become available, we can ensure maximum understanding and maximum impact. I encourage you to continue learning more about this issue, and to talk about this issue with your family, neighbors and friends. Together, we can ensure that the planet we leave to our children is as healthy as the one which we inherited ourselves.

Global Warming Education Act

I believe that providing clear information about global warming, in a variety of forms, can remove the fear and the sense of helplessness that many feel, and encourage individuals to take action. To enhance Americans' understanding of human induced global warming, I introduced the [Global Warming Education Act](#). This bill would create an educational program within the National Science Foundation designed to broaden understanding of climate change, possible long and short-term consequences, and potential solutions.

Protecting Endangered and Threatened Species

Many species of plants and animals have been threatened by increased development over recent years, and I believe it is our responsibility to ensure that they do not face extinction. For example, west coast salmon levels have declined to only 10-15% of what they had been in the 1800s. This decline has hurt the economies of fishing-dependent coastal and rural inland communities throughout northern California. To reverse these trends, I have cosponsored the [Pacific Salmon Recovery Act](#), which would restore salmon habitats in coastal waters and upland drainages; the Fisheries Recovery Act, which would, recover depleted fish stocks and promote the long-term sustainability of marine fisheries, the Fisheries Science and Management Enhancement Act, which would bring science to the fishery management process; and the Salmon Planning Act, designed to help restore salmon populations in the Pacific Northwest.

Preserving Public Lands, Forests, Farms, and Ranch Lands

Clearcutting, roadbuilding, and excessive logging are causing alarming amounts of environmental damage, especially in ancient forests, roadless areas, and other fragile forests. It

is evident that federal forest policy must provide help to protect these areas for future generations. .

Defending Sensitive Areas from Oil and Gas Drilling

A key element of California's diverse economy is its unparalleled stretch of coastline. Indeed, it has been the economic value of the coast that has in great part spurred the efforts to end offshore oil and gas drilling in California. I have consistently joined many of my California colleagues in Congress in opposing efforts to conduct offshore oil and gas inventories and to open these areas to drilling.

I have also opposed drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge ([ANWR](#)). I opposed the inclusion of drilling in ANWR in any energy legislation and continue to oppose including this important policy change in the budget reconciliation bill. Proponents of drilling who claim that pipelines in pristine wilderness areas are perfectly safe have been dealt a blow by the revelation of massive leakage and corrosion in BP's pipe network based in Prudhoe Bay. Thousands of gallons of oil have leaked from the corroded pipes, leading BP to announce a replacement of the entire Prudhoe Bay pipeline.

Protecting Air Quality

Greenhouse gas emissions and traditional pollutants threaten the quality of life for all Americans. I have cosponsored several bills to clean up the air we breathe, such as the National Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory Act, which would establish a comprehensive mandatory greenhouse gas inventory, registry, and information system that will encourage emission reductions.

Vehicle emissions are another threat to air quality. On the personal level, I drive a hybrid electric car when I am at work in Washington. While the impact of this one car alone is small, the example I hope it sets for those I represent and all Americans is much larger – individual decisions made by individual Americans to purchase alternative fuel cars and reduce their gasoline consumption send a strong message to Congress and the President that we don't want to remain dependent on gasoline. I also believe that we must increase fuel economy standards to achieve this goal.

Ensuring Clean Water

The cleanliness of our water faces threats on a number of fronts. For example, contamination

by perchlorate, a carcinogen, threatens drinking water supplies nationwide, and in South Santa Clara County in particular. To address the problem, I sponsored the Safe Drinking Water for Healthy Communities, which would declare perchlorate a contaminant and require the establishment of a maximum contamination safety level, require that information on the discharge and storage of perchlorate be reported to the [Environmental Protection Agency](#) and the appropriate state water pollution control agency, impose fines on violators, and deposit those fines in a perchlorate pollution prevention fund which would provide loans to public water suppliers and private well owners to replace water contaminated by perchlorate. I have also worked with my South Santa Clara County colleagues to secure funding to clean up contaminated ground water in the Morgan Hill-San Martin-Gilroy area.